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Governor



JAMES M. Le BLANC
Secretary

State of Louisiana
Department of Public Safety and Corrections

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NAAWS Names LeBlanc "Warden of the Year"

(Baton Rouge) The North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents (NAAWS) has chosen newly appointed Department of Public Safety and Corrections Secretary James M. LeBlanc "Warden of the Year" for 2007 – 2008. LeBlanc was nominated by former DPS&C Secretary Richard L. Stalder.

As warden of Dixon Correctional Institute (DCI) until recently, LeBlanc is credited with efficient management of more than 550 staff members and a budget in excess of \$41 million. His outstanding career in Corrections (starting in 1973) includes service as the Department's Undersecretary (1992-1995) and DCI Warden since 1996. He is also a Charles E. Dunbar Award recipient (Civil Service). LeBlanc's passion for implementing new and successful programs, especially DCI's focus on offender reentry into society, has lowered recidivism rates and will soon be duplicated throughout the Department.

According to NAAWS Executive Director, Art Leonardo, LeBlanc was the unanimous choice of the 15-member panel, five of whom were previous winners of the award. Each year, NAAWS chooses an individual who has shown leadership as a warden over an extended period of time and someone who shows dedication to caring for both staff and inmates and who runs a facility in an exemplary manner.

When Hurricane Katrina struck, LeBlanc was on the front lines helping with the evacuation of thousands of inmates from Orleans Parish prison. Once inmates had been accounted for and placed at DCI and other facilities across the state, LeBlanc and DCI opened their arms to rescued animals, providing shelter and care for hundreds of pets until they could be reunited with their owners. The pet sheltering effort led to an

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agreement between DCI, the Humane Society of the United States and the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine for the shelter and care of animals on DCI grounds in the event of a future emergency. The new shelter is currently under construction.

Among the other innovative programs LeBlanc has pushed is the Department's first Youthful Offender Program (YOP) which opened at DCI in 2002. YOP provides segregated housing and intensive education and counseling for offenders 19 years of age and younger. In October 2004, DCI opened the first prison End Stage Renal Dialysis Treatment facility in Louisiana. Locating the facility on prison grounds decreases security risks that are inherent in the transportation of inmates from institutional grounds to points of dialysis treatment.

DCI was also first to open a Faith and Character Based Dormitory program for inmates in November 2004 and in July 2006, DCI partnered with the South Central Laborers Training and Apprenticeship Fund to provide inmates with both OSHA certification and job skills training in the construction industry. This L.I.F.E. program (Laborers and Industrial Force Equipping) has been duplicated at two other institutions and targets inmates who are close to their release dates and who are returning to storm-affected areas.

In addition to the responsibilities of warden and now Secretary, LeBlanc also serves as a board member of the state's Office of Group Benefits and as the Statewide Coordinator for the Governor's "Project Clean Up" Task Force.

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